

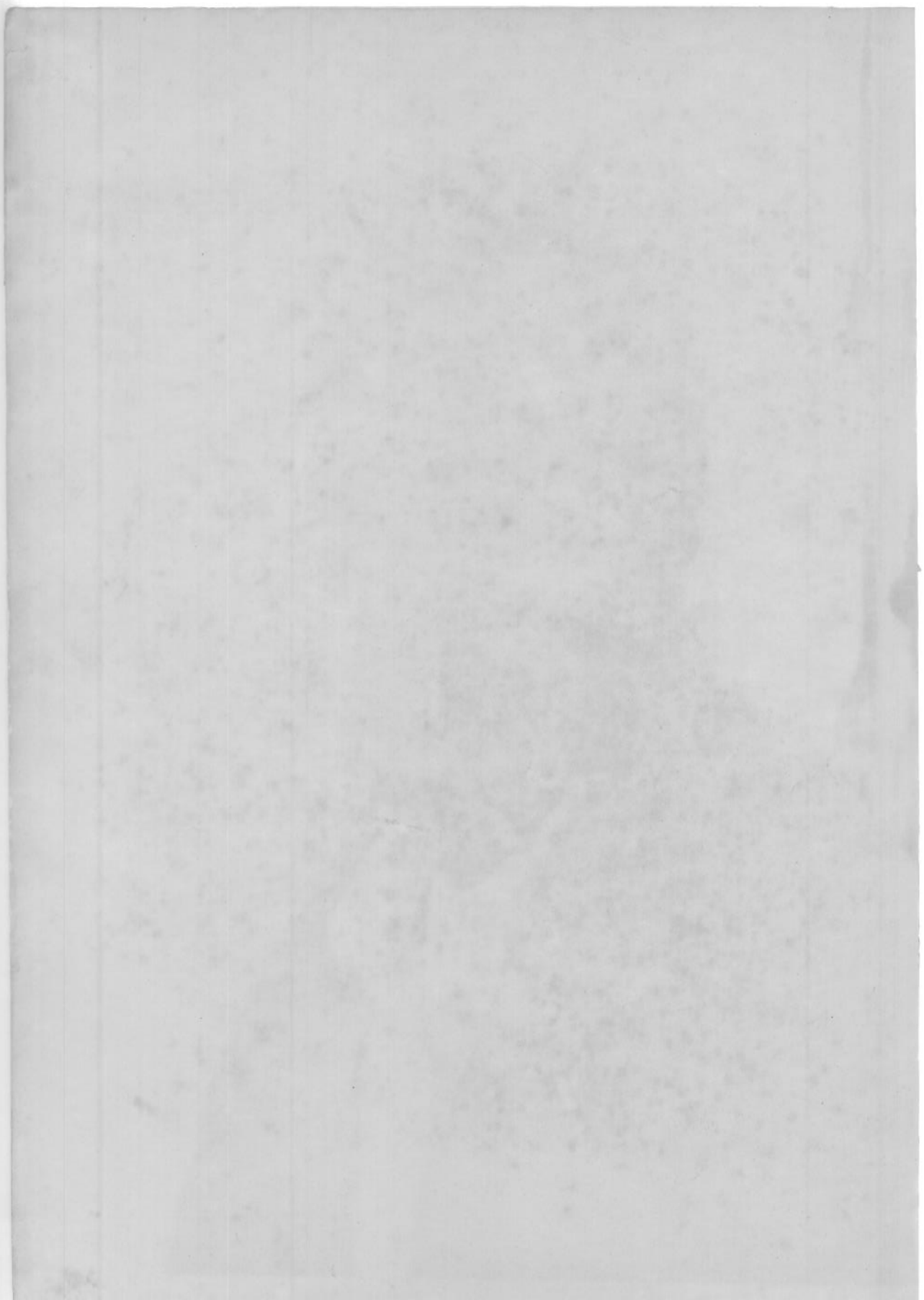
November 95

Rs 5-00

Phoenix

JOURNAL ON MUSIC & DANCE







PHOENIX

Journal on Music and Dance

Vol 1 November 1995 No 1

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Contributions from readers on music and dance are welcome. They should be neatly typed in English on one side of the paper double spaced.

Adequate return postage should be enclosed for the return of unaccepted articles.

No remuneration is payable at present. But when adequate circulation is built up, contributions will be adequately compensated.

Annual Subscription: Rs 50-00
Three Years: Rs 140-00

Please send all remittances to
PHOENIX

The Circulation Manager
 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar
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RN 45468/87

Cover Photo:
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Messages

I
It is but fitting that my esteemed friends S.N.Chandrashekar and M. Suryaprasad who are deeply interested in the performing arts like music, dance and drama are embarking upon the publication of a new magazine devoted to fine arts to be named as Phoenix which will be unique in its contents and presentation. It is a fact that there is a paucity of such informative good magazines particularly devoted to the advancement of music and dance. Art students and rasikas are in need of more knowledge both critical and analytical of our performing arts which would certainly help them, especially youth to understand the intricacies of the fine arts and thereby appreciate better our priceless heritage in all its grandeur.

Consequently the number of knowledgeable rasikas will be increased for the promotion of these arts. I firmly hope that this magazine will have a vital role in art education and I congratulate my enthusiastic friends on their venture. I wish the magazine all speedy progress and total success.

R.K.Srikantan, Bangalore

II

I know that a magazine devoted to the cause of music and dance is being brought out. There are a few newsletters, monthly and quarterly, published by some music organisations mainly to focus their programmes.

But there is room and need for a high quality magazine exclusively dedicated to the promotion of music and dance conveying authentic knowledge in this vast field, narrating accounts of the lives and contributions

of the great vidwans, rendering informed criticism and assessment of the activities in the field, including books, treatises and cassettes etc to mention only some items.

Knowing as I do, the deep interest in the cause of persons involved in this venture and their rich knowledge and experience, I am confident that the periodical will make a significant contribution to the cause and I do hope that it will receive solid support from the interested public and the concerned authorities.

I wish the venture all success.

*Justice Nittoor Sreenivasa Rau
President, Percussive Arts
Centre(Regd), Bangalore*

III

I am much delighted to note that under your visionary editorship an English journal for music and dance is being published. Thus you are not only filling up a big void but also contributing to the healthier development of the classical music and dance field and artistes.

I wish all the best to the very ambitious magazine, "Phoenix".

*Pandit Seshadri Gawai
Principal, Sri Aravinda Sangeetha
Vidyalaya, Editor, Gayana Ganga*

IV

I am delighted to hear that you and S.N.Chandra Sekhar are planning to start a magazine which is to be devoted solely to music and dance and oppex arts in Karnataka (in English) with the worthwhile objective of projecting our arts and artistes beyond Karnataka. I wish you all success in your venture, both in my personal capacity, as a dancer and as the President of the Karnataka Nritya Kala

Parishath. I have always felt that the arts and artistes of Karnataka need a wider media coverage inside and outside the country for in my opinion we have some very great artistes, both young and old in our State.

*Leela Ramanathan
President, Karnataka Nritya Kala
Parishath, Bangalore.*

V

It gives me great pleasure to know that a new profusely illustrated monthly magazine in English, 'Phoenix', will be launched. It is a pity that great artists of Karnataka in the fields of music and dance are little known outside Karnataka as most of the magazines are in Kannada and hence restricted to only our State.

Phoenix will bring our artists and heritage of Karnataka into focus and limelight thus expanding the spheres of Indian art and artists into a larger world of appreciation and recognition. I wish this interesting magazine great success and I congratulate S.N.C and M.S.P for undertaking such a laudable enterprise.

*U.K. Chandrabhaga Devi
President, Karnataka Sangeetha
Nrithya Academy, Bangalore*

VI

I am more than happy to hear that the greatly felt need of popularising Karnataka's performing arts outside the state and the country is being considered by our veteran art critics, S.N. Chandrasekar and M.Surya Prasad who are launching an art journal in English titled, 'Phoenix', aimed at propagating the artistes of Karnataka.

I join the artistes of Karnataka in congratulating our friends as their venture and wishing the journal all success.

*Maya Rao
Naty Institute of Kathak and
Choreography*

Editorial



Fulfilling the Need

A periodical dedicated to the performing arts is no new idea. At any rate PHOENIX is not the first in the line. There have been quite a few predecessors, some surviving and some others folded up for extraneous reasons. A majority of them, including those which have stood the test of time, have been in Kannada and understandably so.

It is here that PHOENIX makes a departure. Perhaps it will be the first in the State to come out in English. That doesn't in anyway mean that the promoters of this venture are less proud of their State language. Nor does it betray any slavish mentality towards English, as it is generally made out to be. In fact, all four of them are born and bred on this soil, none being less proficient in that language too!

Hence an explanation for an English journal. However much a journal in Kannada serves the twin arts of dance and music, its appeal can't cut across the borders of our State. Under the circumstances there are few avenues through which even our own immediate neighbors can come to know about the state of the art on this side of the border. This can be done only by an English journal. And hence its justification.

In a world which dazzles in publicity, a medium of this kind thus is an imperative need. Phoenix is a sincere attempt to fulfil that need, nay a desideratum. As a journal it will not only be a chronicle of artistic events in the State, but will keep a tab on artists espousing the twin arts. Hence it would be an ideal forum for the release of publicity material relating to activities of music and dance, including 'arangetrams'. Of special interest should be the column on radio music, a genre which has been neglected by the print media of long.

The promoters earnestly hope that all those engaged in the twin use the columns of this new journal to our mutual benefit.

S.N.Chandrasekhar.

Calling AIR

The advent of the Radio is one of the best things that could have happened to connoisseurs in general and musicians in particular. Besides the featuring of top-notchers regularly, there is ample scope for the listener to hear artistes not commonly available otherwise. There is as much incentive for young artistes.

The radio, on its part, has devised a near perfected system of assessing the quality of each performer. The grading is done by panels of experts both for the frequency and duration of the programme assigned to each. But it can't be as readily conceded that there is strict adherence to standards, judging by the quality one has to contend with. Sub-standard stuff is by no means a rarity.

This column is an attempt to keep tab on as many broadcast programmes in the preceding month. The stress is on artistes from the State though reference to those emanating from other stations is not ruled out. It is hoped the artiste community, the authorities as also the listening cognescenti will take the asides in the right spirit and help PHOENIX to serve a worthy cause and thereby the AIR to serve the listening public better:

The impressive feature on "Srikrishna" (morning of August 17) should be the most auspicious curtain riser for this column. It was designed by 'Shathavadhani' R.Ganesh, who has made a name in spontaneously meeting the needs of many an aspiring choreographer to devise dance features and dance-dramas. The illustration through music was entrusted to the tested vocal of T.S.Satyavati. The selection of verses on Krishna was as purposeful as it was judicious,



Padma Gurudutt

a tribute to the genius of Ganesh. Their rendition, ensconced in choice ragas was as effective, impactful.

Shahana (Ikanannu), Ritigoula (Jananininnu) and Saveri were the ragas Satyavati chose for her regular programme (9:15 a.m., Sept.1). There can't be two opinions about Satya's voice, talent and manner of singing. With equal stress on 'matu' and 'dhatu', what she sings verily surges out of her very being. It is difficult to imagine how she has not gone up the ladder.



Tara Mohan

Earlier, Padma Gurudutt (8:30 a.m. on August 8) had captured the listeners' attention with a wholesome Bilahari (Gopalam Seveham). The effusion of well knit 'sancharas' lent a convincing imagery of the melody.

Later in the day Tara Mohan's Keeravani revived memories of a bygone era. It was pleasant, absorbing listening.

Another vainika who has a reputation for consistency is Sudha Vadiraj (9:30 am, August 18). But her rendition of the celebrated Swarajati in Bhairavi was not fully evocative. Her Kalyana-Vasantha number put her back on the rails. The 'nyasa' and the phraseology were impressive.

"Dinamani Vamsha", the soulful Harikambodi composition of Thyagaiah gave K.V.Shantaratanam (morning of August 19) a sound beginning. The kriti, especially was full of feeling. Pantuvarali (Aparama Bhakti) was more impressive for all its subtleties of 'niraval' and 'swara' passages. It all made one wonder how she is not heard much on the concert stage.

When one listens to veteran R.R.Keshavamurthy on the violin (8:30 a.m., August 20), it is impossible to believe that he is past his prime. Kedaragoula and Hindola were the two ragas that came for sustained treatment. The very applicability of the nuances peculiar to the ragas served as an example of a complete artiste that he is. Indeed, here is a case where one unhesitatingly would use the appellation "Vidwan".

In the prestigious South-Zone hookup on the same night, M.K. Pranesh (flute, student of M.R. Doreswamy) easily carried the day. Though he seemed a little hesitant as he began with "lambodara" (Kambodi), he warmed up with Pantuvarali (Raghuvara). It acquired a special delight at the improvisational flashes.



Vinayak Torvi

Suma Sudhindra's veena recital (9:30 a.m. on August 22) fell short of expectation. The Nayaki number (was it Palayamam?) was run through with an easy gait. But Purvikalyani (Meenakshim) was not in good shape. She appeared certainly out of sorts, not in shape.

As usual, R.K.Srikantan's concert on the same night was a proportioned presentation of choice melodies. "Sri Narada" (Kanada) showed a mastery one associates with an artiste of his generation. His Kedara-goula (Tulasibilva) flashed in its balanced alapana, the infrequently-heard Thyagaraja kriti glorying in its measured development of 'niraval' and 'swara' passages.

But the voice of the seasoned C.K.Tara (9:30 a.m. August 24) was seemingly not in mettle. Her Amritavarshini gave glimpses of her past records. But neither the alap for Kharaharapriya nor the fine Vasudevachar kriti "Ra Ra Rajeeva" could stand a test.

Nor was there much to write home about N. Chokkamma's veena (8:30 a.m. August 25). Her Behag (Smarajana) meandered rather aimlessly to show that her best is far behind her.

Popular R.K.Suryanarayana was featured in a veena concert (10:10 a.m. August 22). There was customary abandon when he began with a Varnam in Shankarabharana. But the piece was not convincing, nor Mukhari that

followed it. It was his Shanmukhapriya that revealed his brilliance, both in technique and raga bhava, the familiar kriti Marivere acquiring a delight as Suri drifted to a neat Thanam.

Kashi Vishalakshi (8:30 a.m. August 30) is no unfamiliar name either. Her Siddhivinayakam (Shanmukhapriya) appeared pedestrian. Her alapana for Khamas was more mature, the delineation standing out for its steady laya.

Vinayak Toravi in his night concert on August 31 gave a majestic portrayal of Jaijaiivanti. It was chiselled with fleeting 'taans', acquiring a fine balance between 'chalan' and 'laya'. Vinayak lived upto his reputation.

Obituary S.Prakash



S. Prakash, noted Mridangam artist died of heart attack on September 10, 95 at Bangalore, at his residence. He was 47.

Prakash had accompanied many leading artists of Karnataka.

PHOENIX conveys its condolences to his family.

Editor

??Quiz-1

by M. Surya Prasad

1. When was Thyagaraja born?
2. What is Bismillah Khan famous for?
3. How many chapters has Bharatamuni's Natya Shashtra?
4. Who are the authors of "Natya Darpana"?
5. Name the person who rejuvenated the Kuchipudi Natya?
6. Date of Thyagaraja's Death?
7. Name a few *sushira vadyas*.
8. Who is a Keertana vidwan?
9. Name the divisions of Manodharma Sangeetha.
10. Name a few vidwans who name ragas for expellation.

(Solutions to Quiz-1 on page 14)

Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and better coverage, make them brief. Send your comments to:

The Editor
PHOENIX
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar,
Bangalore 560009

RRK

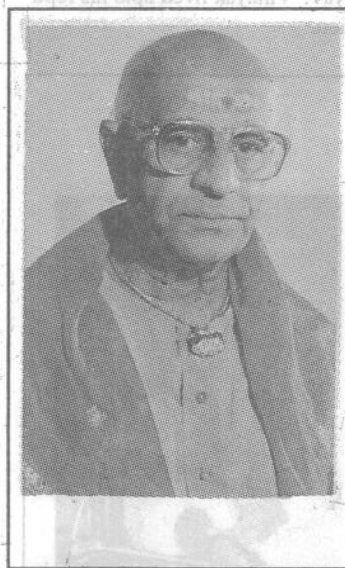
The Indefatigable Sadhaka

Elsewhere in this issue is a note on a violin solo of veteran R.R. Keshavamurthy broadcast recently over the AIR. The highlight of that recital was Kedaragoula (Venugana loludu). As the virtuoso unfolded the majestic melody, one was struck by the depth of his technique and imagination, accounting for the completeness to his music. As is his wont, the tone was a little harsh, but the 'gamakas' and 'sangatis' were clear, heightening the total gestalt of the rendition. It was good music, his playing standing out for its elegant coherence.

Though on the wrong side of eighty, what a control he exercises both on his mode and mood! That indeed is the speciality of Keshavamurthy, a 'sadhaka' right through, a 'sadhana' which has given him complete control both over his music and the instrument.

Like most artistes of his generation, the octogenarian was brought up in an exclusive musical coterie. Training in music was imparted to him early in life by his father Ramaswamiah, a vocalist and violinist of considerable prowess. That, however was only the ground work, a sound one at that no doubt. Even at that stage, Keshavamurthy had a vision of his own, to fulfil which he went to masters like Chikka Ramarao and later to Bidaram Krishnappa, one of the pillars of the cultural edifice that the Mysore palace of that era was, to become one of his best-known disciples.

Which means he was a contemporary of the famous T. Chowdiah. Yes, like the latter Keshavamurthy also perfected the seven-stringed variation, though most of his disciples including the late Anoor Ramakrishna had opted for the original five-stringed violin.



But for some inexplicable reason, Keshavamurthy did not win as much and as fast a recognition as his contemporaries did. True, to be a contemporary could be as much an advantage as a disadvantage. In many instances the only satisfaction could be to be known as a compeer of such stalwarts. And in the case of Keshavamurthy, his was a time when not only Chowdiah, but stalwarts like Rajamanickiam Pillai, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Papa Venkataramiah, Mayavaram

Govindaraja Pillai, to name only a few, reigned supreme. As cadging for favors is not in his nature, Keshavamurthy remained contented to lay low and has never regretted it either. He took his chances as they came and as luck would have it, they came in trickles, certainly not enough to fully exhibit his innate talent.

In such adverse circumstances and in the face of stiff competition, what he has achieved is something commendable. His stature in music circles is as high as any others of his generation, having displayed his virtuosity as emphatically as a soloist and an accompanist. Having completed the degree course, he can express himself lucidly in both Kannada and English and his lecture-demonstrations to numerous distinguished gatherings have been received with utmost respect.

More importantly, Keshavamurthy has to his credit as many as 14 works on subjects relating to music. They are invaluable for students of music. Equally significant is his role as a teacher, a role which has given him supreme satisfaction. Though not as dramatically as in other cases, recognition has not been denied to him after all. The most coveted of them all is the prestigious "Kanaka-Purandhara" prashasti, the highest honour for music in the State. The two revered Peethadhipatis of Rambhampur and Sringeri have conferred titles on him and the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, the premier music sabha of the South had invited him to preside over one of its annual conference. He is also the recipient of the Chowdiah Memorial award of the Academy of Music. The State Sangeet-Nritya Academy of which he was a member for more than one term, has also honoured him with its award and the Rajyotsava Award came to him just before the "Kanaka-Purandhara".

All in all, his is a life not without its challenges, challenges which he has met dispassionately so as to be at peace with the world.

Mysore Dancer makes a Mark

After the visual holiday spurt, with several NRI groups vying with local talent to hog headlines there has been an inexplicable slump in the City's dance scene. The only exception is a couple of recitals under the auspices of the Every Friday Cultural fare at Yavanika.

One of them was a dancer from Mysore, the erstwhile seat of culture in the State. The dancer Kiran Ganesh, a student of Vasundhara Doreswamy, is certainly no novice, though she was being seen in the City for the first time. Besides distinctions in examinations, Kiran has several prizes to her credit. Nor is she short of stage experience.

All this was borne out in her elegant stance. Her 'thattu-mettu' is equally steady as evidenced in the two-tier invocatory of a Mallari and Ganesha Panchakam. The Nritta forays in the contrived varnam "Srikrishna Kamalanatho" (Ritigoula) culled out from "Sri Krishna Kamamritam", revealed a strict adherence to 'anga-shudham', though her 'are mandi' could not stand the test of proportion. But the abandon with which she disposed of the 'theermanams' was reassuring.

But the choice of the repertoire, including the Varnam left much to be desired. None of the pieces could meet the demands of 'rasabhinaya', the underlying 'rasa' in each case being 'Bhakti' which falls outside the purview of 'nava rasas'. Evocation for the Varnam as also the Kanada padam "Elliruvano" was fines to a

description of Krishna, and in the Delineation appeared redundant.

The musical support in the wings was as revealing. Guruprasad's vocal refrain was undoubtedly a high-spot in the 90 minute fare, while Vasundhara's Nattuvangam was fairly assertive.

Under the same banner, later in the month was seen another artiste of note. Nalini Prakash, a student of Sudharani Raghupathy of Madras, is also a new face and hails from outside the State. Her stance and confidence with which she ran through a compact programme made an immediate impact on receptive audience.

Nalini Revealed a firm grasp of the grammar of dance in the invocatory stage itself. Her 'angikas' were well defined and the 'charis' not short of variety. But her facials, as exemplified in the varnam "Vanamayile" (Shanmukhapriya) had their limitation. The underlying 'virahotkhandita' nayika came alive only in the 'ethukade' stage. The piece, therefore, had to sustain on the Nritta which one must concede was substantial.

Another dance programme which deserves note for its sheer choreographic adventure is "Daksha Yagna", a dance drama group under B.J.Meera. It was part of the 141st Birthday celebrations of Narayana guru. Hence, the justification of Malayalam script.

Yet the denouncement was so dramatic that it was not beyond the comprehension of the learned and the laity alike. Though the mixed group comprised both Bharatanatyam and

Kuchipudi dancers, the two Kuchipudi exponents, Shibu Joseph and Deepa, both disciples of the famed Manju Bhargavi, were head and shoulders above their Bharathanatyam counterparts. In their lead roles, they carried the day!

Stories like 'Daksha Yagna' certainly are not irrelevant as a layman's delight. But it calls for a certain amount of refinement if they have to sustain the interest of the urban elite. Especially out of tune were the sequences where the Shiva Ganas make their appearance. One wonders how lord Shiva, the embodiment of 'Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram' could account for such crude elements! Obviously, it is conceived to cater to popular appeal.

Though the choreography lent itself was stamp of coherence was in "Shivashtakam", highlighting an aspect of Shiva Tandava. Naturally too, as the credit for its choreography goes to veteran Vempati Chinna Satyam!

ESSENCE

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PHOENIX

A Magazine on Dance and
Music

R.K. Srikantan Joins the Galaxy

S.N. Chandrasekhar

The tidings from across the border that one of our esteemed vocalists, R.K. Srikantan has been selected for the year's "Sangeeta Kalanidhi" title of the Music Academy, Madras has heartened all music-lovers of the State. It is a distinction which had eluded him for long and it is good that the leading music organisation of the country has at last recognised his contribution to music, choosing him to preside over the prestigious annual conference later this year.

Srikantan himself is no stranger to that august body of musicians. He has been a regular invitee at its annual events for nearly four decades, both as a performer and for lecture demonstrations. Even otherwise, his reputation as a consistent performer in that citadel of Carnatic Music, as much as he is in his home state, is unquestioned. He is as popular in the other centres of Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Kerala as he is in the Hindustani belt.

Yet as destiny would have it, it took almost 10 years after veteran vainika V.Doreswamy Iyengar was conferred the title for another artiste of similar stature from Karnataka to get the coveted honour. With that he joins a galaxy of his compatriots like Mysore Vasudevacharya, Rallapalle Ananthakrishna Sharma, T.Chowdaiah and Dr. Iyengar. Indeed, it is well deserved, a crowning glory to an illustrious career that is studded with distinctions all the way.

In this connection, it may not be out of place to recall that when speaker after speaker at a function got up to



Srikantan and his wife

felicitate the maestro on his 75th birthday were singing plaudits on his achievements, the one thought uppermost in their minds was that he was not favored for this title which is

almost the ultimate in the life of a musician. They included Dr.Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the doyen of Carnatic music, who was himself generous in his references to Srikantan's standing in the genre. Those blessings which Srikantan himself have valued immensely, has borne fruit much to the delight of his numerous admirers here and elsewhere.

Yes, it is no exaggeration if one were to say that Srikantan has won as many awards outside the State as in it. Why, among his many honours is an "Asthana Vidwan" of the Sri Venkateswara temple in Pittsburgh, U.S.A. Equally worthy of mention is the privilege of being the visiting professor of a Canadian University, the other university which has honoured him similarly being the Palghat University in Kerala.

But strange as it may seem unlike most of his contemporaries, neither Srikantan himself nor anyone of his equally reputed brothers violinist, R.K. Venkatarama Sastry or Vocalists. R.K. Narayana swamy and R.K.Ramanathan had enjoyed the status of an 'Asthana Vidwan' in Mysore. Though he had started giving recitals almost at the same time he began his schooling, recognition came to Srikantan only after he joined the AIR as a staff artiste, first at Mysore and later in Bangalore when the station moved over there. During a career spanning nearly 30 years, Srikantan served the institution in varied capacities-



Srikantan at a concert



M.S. Sheela

-a performer, producer of features and retired as Producer of Music, the highest position that an artiste can aspire to in that governmental set up.

As the veteran artiste himself confesses, the AIR had not only given him opportunities to exhibit his innate talent, but helped him to come into contact with eminent personalities in the field of art and letters. But the programme which made him a household name in Karnataka is his weekly music lesson. These programmes won for him innumerable admirers many of whom became his students. Among them many have made a grade both on the AIR as well as on the concert stage. His own son R.S. Ramakanth, M.S. Sheela,



Suma Sudhindra

T.S. Sathyavati, Uma Gopalaswamy and Vainikas Suma Sudhindra and Shanti Rao are a few of them.

Srikantan turned 75 only a couple of months ago. He was born at Rudrapatnam, a small hamlet in Hassan district on the banks of the Cauvery, on the auspicious day of Pongal, 1920. His father Krishna Sastry a well-known Harikatha vidwan of his times, was his first guru. Later he came under the tutelage of his elder brother R.K. Venkatarama Sastry, senior student of the violin maestro T. Chowdaiah. But he evolved a style of his own, his open-mouth technique



S.R.S. Ramakanth

known as much for its modulation as to 'sahitya shuddhi'. It is an eclectic style. He had a vision of his own for an artistic flight soaring high. To reach it he needed reinforcements from every available source. And that is what he did, an exercise which demanded incessant 'sadhana', going through a process of assimilation and transformation. Anyone conversant with the creative functioning in the art can well imagine that this metamorphosis means continued intellectual pursuit combined with arduous practice. Even to this day when he has been recognised as a master and fondly referred to as "Dikshitar" by his admirers, Srikantan is as steadfast in his 'sadhana' as he is meticulous in his teaching. That is what has kept him



Shanti Rao

trim and can withstand the rigours of a four-hour concert, endearing himself as much to his supporting accompanists as to his listeners.

Indeed, his singing is as fresh and sensitive as it was in his youth, a tribute to the care and attention he has paid to his vocal chords, worthy of the sobriquet "Sirikantha". May that 'rich timbre' endure is the fond wish of all his admirers!

Next Issue

Bangalore Gayana Samaja's march in 90 years. S.N. Chandrasekhar traces its glorious history.

27th Music Conference of Bangalore Gayana Samaja

Heritage Kala Utsav of Sterling Resorts and Nada Surabhi Cultural Festivals, M. Surya Prasad takes a look at the festivals.

Cassettes Causerie

Calling AIR

Young Talents and many more interesting columns.

Udupi Hosts Memorable Venu Utsav

Bangalore K Venkataram

Karnataka Sangeetha Nruthya Academy organised a Venu Utsav at Udupi on September 23 and 24, 95. The local Paryaya Sheerumutt had hosted the two day fare.

Apart from the inaugural and valedictory sessions, there were symposia of different aspects of flute and dance recitals. His Holiness Sri Lakshmivara Thirtha Sripadangalavaru inaugurated the festival. K. Ramamurthy Rao, convener, welcomed the invitees. Chandrabhaga Devi, chairperson of the Academy, presented a brief on the Academy's projects. Durga Avarthi, Registrar proposed a vote of thanks.

Loka V Shankar in the inaugural recital regaled with 'Ganamurthe' and 'Bala Gopala' (Bhairavi). She was supported by B. Raghuram and S.R. Anantharaman on violin and mrudanga respectively.

A.V. Prakash commenced with a Chowdiah composition in Bahudari 'Prasanna Ganapathe'. His Lathangi and Shuddhasaveri were neat. He was supported by H.K. Narasimhamurthy and Jayachandra Rao on violin and mrudanga.

H.K. Raghavendra Rao, a local artiste supported by H.K. Narasimhamurthy and Jayachandra Rao on violin and mrudanga dwelt at length on Kanada. Veteran V Desikachar opted for compositions on Krishna, like 'Ganamurthy', 'Venuganalodu', 'Baro', 'Madhava Mamava' etc. He was



M.A. Chandankumar

supported by Ananthapadmanabha and M. Gururaja on violin and mrudanga.

M.A. Chandankumar, great-



Loka V Shankar

grandson of Chowdiah had M.G. Narahari and P. Nataraj for his accompanists. He also chose Lathangi, besides Bindumalini and Kaanada. A compact fare. Kumari Vani, supported by M.G. Narahari and H.L. Shivashankar started with 'Ganamurthe'. She elaborated Madhyamavathi while K.P. Upadhyaya supported by H.N. Bhaskar and H.L. Shivashankar rendered on impressive Saraswathi.

Janaranjani and Ranjani were the other pieces.

A 'Jugalbandi' featuring Mariraja Menadala (Hindustani) and G. Rajnarayan (Karnatic) was marked more on sound than Nada, with the tabla exceeding the acceptable decibel levels. The flutists themselves played regas Hamsadhwani and Abhogi with restraint and understanding, despite the tendency to accelerate by the Hindusthani artiste.

Sandhya and Kiran presented a dance duet 'Kolaline Kare', while Nirupama and Rajendra presented a Kathak fare.

The highlight of the festival was the symposia. The first symposium dealt with the historical and literary aspects linked with the celestial instrument. The key note address of the noted scholar B.V.K. Shastri read by M.S. Sheela referred to Curt Sachs and Pannalal Ghosh to trace the past, contemporary scene and the prospects of electronic instruments in future.



T.R. Srinath

Lakshmitatachar quoted reference on flute in Sanskrit literature while Rama Bennur drew on the many reference in Kannada literature. M. Rajagopalacharya referred to the Gramas and Samaveda (Nada Shiksha) and the Kharaharapriya and Harikambodhi scales (Bharatha Kosha).

S.N. Chandrashekar, noted critic, chaired the session.

The afternoon session was chaired by Eswariah, editor, Udayavani. The paper of V. Sampathkumaracharya on historical reference to flute was read by K. Ramamurthy Rao. The session centered round the technical aspects of flute. T.R. Srinath referred to the different blowing and fingering techniques including cross fingering and flat fingering. He stressed on the 'speaking length of the air column' in the flute.

Balakrishna Thantri explained his experiments on the instruments like the PVC flutes, multipurpose flutes, adjustable flutes etc. He recalled the services of Nagercoil Ananthaarayanan, Sundaram, (father of flutist Raghu and Ravi) and Madras Shankaralingam. G. Rajnarayan explained the science behind the production of sounds and referred to the vibrations. Variations in pressure due to movement of side and straight blowing, tracing the origins to closed end pipes (like key rods).

Eswariah in his presidential address said, classical arts were not for the masses. Refinement and elevation of taste were to be acquired by incessant listening and getting exposed to the arts.

The third symposium focussed on the flute in different styles. K.S.

Rajesh spoke on flute in Hindusthani style, with a demonstration on the bansuri. Bangalore K Venkataram traced the elevation to concert status by Sarabha Sastry from its supporting status, popularisation by Palladam Sanjeeva Rao and the elevation to the present exalted status by flute wizard, T.R. Mahalingam (Mali). He also referred to the present day lower sruti flutes and the contemporary state of art practiced by B.N. Suresh and the techniques adopted by N. Ramani.

Dwaraki Krishnaswamy assisted by Maithili demonstrated flute's effectiveness in dance. H.S. Anasuya Kulkarni exhibited flutes of several countries like Indonesia, Papua-New Guinea, Ethiopia, the Philippines and Thailand were the countries from where she exhibited these flutes. She also demonstrated the playing on some.

The valedictory session chaired by Chandrabhaga Devi was addressed by veteran flutist M.R. Doreswamy. The Paryaya Mutt Sear delivered the benedictory address.

A noteworthy aspect of the entire proceedings was the punctuality maintained right through.

Significantly, this is the first time that so many flutists gathered on a common dais at the pilgrim centre of Lord Krishna, Udupi. If all the papers were to be published, that would be a notable contribution of documentation on the popular wind instrument.

Solutions to Qu?z-1

1. May 4, 1767 (Sarvajitu Samvatsara Chaitra Bahula Panchami).

2. Outstanding Shehanai player.

3. 36

4. Ramachandra and Gunichandra

5. Siddhendra Yogi

6. January 6, 1847 (Prabhava Samvatsara Pushya Bahula Panchami, Wednesday)

7. Flute, Nagaswara, Mukha Veena, Shehnai, Clarinet.

8. A specialist in rendering musical compositions (krithis).

9. Ragalapana, Madhyama kala (tana, ghana), Pallavi, Neraval and Kalpanaswaras.

10. Todi Sitaramayya, Athana Appayya, Todi Sundara rao, Shankarabharana Narasayya, Begade Subramanya Ayyar (Patnam), Narayanagowla Kuppayyar (Veena Kuppayyar), Bhairavi Kempegowda.

For a ring side view of dance and music performance, read
PHOENIX

The Unity in Carnatik Music

R.K.Srikantan

In the modern endeavor of education in carnatik Music, it is the wish of all who value it that its essential features should not be ignored. The medium and technique of any art is put to a new and strange effectiveness by the master artistes. The musician is a painter of sounds. Sounds are his colours, melody and rhythm are light and shade, his own unique personality and imagination are twin brushes with which he creates beautiful forms on the canvas of his voice. The language of art is different in technique and more difficult of acquirements than while studying the three ragas.

Music is intangible and emotional in its essence and substance. The edifice of all art is built on values eternal and absolute in human life, not on those which are contingent and topical.

Muthuswamy Dixitar describes goddess Balambika as "bhava, raga, tala modineem". Tyagaraja describes Lord Rama as "shining like a beacon light on the mountain of nada of seven swaras" (Samajavaragamana) and "samaniga majasudhamaya gana Vichakshana". Lord Genesha is "rakti bhakti bhava sahitanaka tadhara".

The fundamental units of carnatik music then are, rakti, bhakti, bhava, raga and tala. In all the classical musical compositions there is a unification of all these elements. "The parts must be knitted together to get a harmonious whole" applies to music in the striving for achievement of a synthesis of bhava, raga and tala. A person without bhakti cannot perform his karma in the right spirit and also a

person devoid of gnana cannot enter into the cloisters of bhakti in the discharge of his karma. Similarly a true version of music can be obtained only with the three dimensional effect of bhava, raga and tala, as music is a vanishing architecture. Tyagaraja, Dixitar and Shyama Sastry have founded different schools and styles of carnatik music. In Tyagaraja's melodies bhava acts as a central force, in Dixita's ragas, and in Shyama Sastry's tala. In each of these schools a perfect unity of the three fundamental units has been brought out by the different workmanship of the three past-masters of carnatik music. Tyagaraja has pitched upon the Ramayana as the theme for his music. The epic stands immortal for the depicting of all human emotions in the most simple sonorous language. Tyagaraja appeals to Rama in various moods and expresses his lofty thoughts and high ideals with all simplicity and ease. He does not bring in the complex intricacies of tala. His handling of apoorva ragas with perfect ease is a remarkable feature of his compositions. The aesthetic merit and scientific approach in his composition are revealed in the kalpana of the sangatees. The emotional trend is developed by the beautiful craftsmanship of sangatees. The poet's choice of words and the formation of the sentences breathe the odour of prosody to such peaceful extent that one cannot mark the collision of rhythm and melody.

The outstanding aspect of Dixitar's compositions is the analytical approach of raga swaroopa. Every composition is a masterly achieve-

ment abiding by the raga paddhati and alapana krama. If, at times, a raga is begun in the higher octave, the student is taught how to develop the raga form in a classical way. The vilambita kala of the composition with the relief of the madhyama kala at each anga of the kriti brings in the effect of tala. The choice of the Sanskrit language enhances the majesty and grandeur of carnatik music. The emotional side of the composer is sublimated in the emphasis of purely ananda aspect with a persistent dispassion. The scholarly attainments in astrology and Literature enabling him to exploit the kshetrapuranas and critical study of the several deities.

Shyama Sastry's approach to bhakti and bhava is unique. There is an atmosphere of hopefulness and tenderness from the sincere heart of a child. In Tyagaraja there is the full mystic maturity of a philosopher and in Dixitar, the detached nature of a metaphysician.

Shyama Sastry has revelled in the intricacies of rhythm and has merged the raga swaroopa and bhava with Tala. With the introduction of Sangati Tyagaraja has enriched the bhava of a composition, while Shyama Sastry has enhanced the richness of rhythm in the handling of Sangatis. His choice of the Chapu tala reveals his rhythmic pattern. He has cared more for style in music and hence the raga swaroopa features as a powerful picture, with the stress and strain produced by the rhythmic effect prevalent in his compositions.

Dixitar's compositions are Miltonic. The three colours of these compositions do not lie in the over lengthened vilambita kala but in the correctness of blending the tala and bhava in the raga form.

Thus in the study of great composers the student of carnatik music is guided at every step, how a perfect integration is effected in the three fold path of bhava, raga and tala.

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Cassette



Causerie

Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari
(Sri Sharada Kala Kendra Vol. 16 Rs 30)

V.Kalavathi-Singer; Nalina Mohan-Violin; V.Krishna-Mridanga and M.A. Krishna-Ghata.

Sri Sharada Kala Kendra of popular vocalist R.K.Padmanabha has rendered yeoman service to Carnatic music. Its cassette series comprising the compositions of Mysore Vasudevacharya has proved very useful to learners and performers alike. As many as 15 such cassettes are already in the market, compositions rendered by Padmanabha and his vocal partner D.V.Nagarajan, R.K.Srikantan and M.S.Sheela. The 16th volume highlights many more masterpieces of the celebrated composer. They are rendered by young V.Kalavathi, a



promising disciple of the late Anoor Ramakrishna. The cassette is sure to become as popular as its predecessors.

ESSENCE

Saxophone by K. Anantharam
(Sangeetha-Stereo. Rs 30)

The master Recording Company of Madras, this time has cut a compact concert on Saxophone by K.Anantha ram of Mangalore. Like his senior from the same town, Kadari Gopinath, the youngster has mastered the technique of this essentially western instrument. His blowing power is remarkable as is evidenced in the easy flow of the soulful melody Gowla. Hindola, Arabhi, Yamuna Kalyani, Hamsadhwani and Mohana are among the other ragas. There is no lack of 'ragabhava' in the rendition, Mohana (Sadapalaya) among them standing out for its modal grace.

ESSENCE

Thyagaraja Krithis

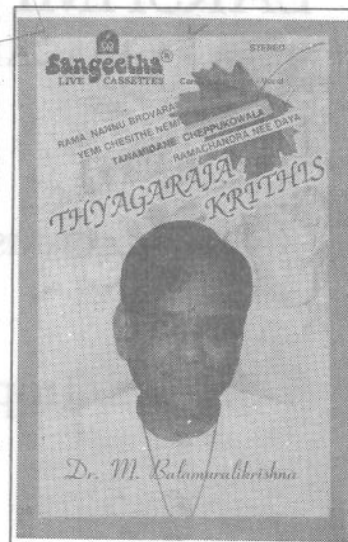
Carnatic classical vocal:
Dr.M.Balamuralikrishna; Sangeetha live cassettes 6 ECDB 584 Stereo.

Songs rendered: Side A: 'Ramanannu brovara' (Harikambhoji); 'Emi

jesiti nemi' (Todi). Side B - - 'Tanamidane cheppukovala' (Bhoosavali) and 'Ramachandra nee daya' (Suruti).

Dr.M.Balamuralikrishna, the well-known vocalist has done full justice to the krithis and ragas in this cassette. Melodious and multi-ranged voice and sensitivity mark his singing. He opens with an alapana in madhya sthayi in Harikambhoji raga. The entire gamut of the raga is covered in the elaboration. Rendering of the charana 'Meppula kai' in madhyama kala is attractive. The expansive and enchanting Todi has fine details. The akaara sangathees in faster tempo and even sometimes in ati tara sthayi are evocative. The krithi is embellished by nominal swaras.

On side B, a quaint raga and krithi is rendered. Raga Bhoosavali, a derivative of 64th melakarta Vachaspathi, is a shadhava - - sampooma raga. Imagine Kambhoji with prati madhyama, you could visualise the above raga. Balamurali's alapana is both educative and enjoyable. The krithi "Tanamidane cheppukovala" appeals to the heart. The singer enchants us by presenting "Ramachandra nee daya" in Suruti raga. B.V.Raghavendra Rao (violin)



and M.Balachandra (Mridanga) have lent appropriate support.

Dr M. Surya Prasad

SHRUTI LAYA SUDHA:

Sangeetha Live Cassettes; 6 ECD 6199 stereo. Saxophone with Taval. Kadri Gopalnath (Saxophone), A.Kanyakumari (violin), A.K.Palanivel (Taval), S.Karthick (Ghata) and B.Rajasekhar (Morsing) Krithis rendered: Side A -- "Paratpara Parameshwara" (Vachaspathi; Papanasham Shivan). "Tulasidala" (Mayamalavagowla; Thyagaraja). "Padmanabha Pahimurare" (Hindola; Swati Tirunal).

Side B -- "Upacharamu" (Bhairavi; Thyagaraja) and "Hari Chitta Satya" (Jompuri; Purandaradasa)

This is one of the most interesting and ear-catching cassette. The sushira, avanaddha and tata vaadyaas blend together in a refined manner and evoke beautiful pictures of ragas. The instrumental flourishes do not dilute the aesthetics. The cassette opens with



"Paratpara" tagged with brisk swaravinyas. Vachaspathi brims with beauty in the hands of seasoned Kadri Gopalnath and Kanyakumari. The next song "Tulasidala" is made memorable by detailed kalpanaswaras. The swings and twists of Hindola are magnificently etched in the alapana. "Padmanabha Murare" is ornamented

by swaras. These swaras are not only rhythmically taut but expose all the possibilities on an instrumental play. Detailed delineation of Bhairavi is the mainstay of Side B. The mandra sthayi sancharas in particular catch the attention. The grand krithi of Thyagaraja "Upacharamu" shines with all the musical and artistic grandeur. The giht-minute tani avaratana is an audio treat indeed. Purandaradasa's "Hari chitta satya" (Jonpuri) rendered crisply leaves a lingering impression. The percussionists rise to the occasion and add beauty to the presentations.

Dr.M.Surya Prasad

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T.V.Ramprasad



T.V. Ramprasad, a vocalist was born in 1969 to Vyasa Rao and Rukmini, noted musicians, Ramprasad evinced interest in Karnatic music at five. He was initiated into music by R.R. Keshavamurthy and sought higher studies under T.V. Gopalakrishnan, S. Rajam and D. Pasupathy.

He has established himself as a vocalist with infinite patience and concentration. His style of singing devotionals has earned him fame. He has sung in the AIR South Zone Music Concert and has appeared several times on the TV.

Ramprasad has given concerts in all major sabhas and cultural festivals of the country. He has toured UK and recorded music to two albums of Sangeetha Recording Co and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

He is the recipient of "Gayana Gandharva" title of Delhi Karnataka Sangha, The All India Best Singer Award of Sangeethayan, New Delhi and the 'Best Vocalist award' in the Yuva Sangeetha Nrithya Mahotsav organised by the South Zone Cultural Centre.

T.V.Ramprasad
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Bangalore 560078 © 646629

Indira Kadambi



Indira Kadambi learnt Bharatnatyam under the renowned Kalamandalam Usha Datar, Narmada and Savithri Jagannatha Rao. She was trained in the aspects of Abhinaya by Kalanidhi Narayan and Mohiniattam under Kalyani Kuttiamma. To add lustre to her art, Indira had a stint under Belakavadi Srinivasa Iyengar for music.

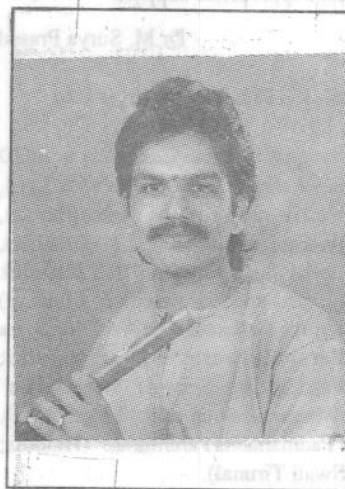
Indira had her "arangetram" when 16 since then she has never looked back. She is a dancer of grace each performance is a class by itself. Flawless hand movements, neat footwork and modest abhinaya distinguish her recitals. Music is provided by her able husband, T.V. Ramprasad.

Indira has danced in a number of cultural festivals, including the tours in the UK and Germany, conducting workshops on the classical idiom.

Indira in association with her husband has established the Naadanta Academy of Dance and Music in Bangalore. She is a faculty member of Bharatnatyam at Nrityagram, Bangalore.

Indira Kadambi
504 Girija Apts, :A: Block,
Cross, J.P. Nagar, II Phase,
Bangalore 560078 © 646629

V.K.Raman



V. K. Raman (26), a flutist was born in Mysore. Student of A.V.Prakash, he was greatly influenced by Maestros T.R.Mahalingam and N. Ramani is his art.

Recipient of junior and senior scholarship of the Union Government for music, he is a first rank holder in the Government music examination. He has won the first prize in the AIR national level instrumental music competition and the "Surmani" title of Sur Singer Samsad, Bombay.

Raman has developed an impressive style of playing having successfully come out of the main shortcomings of flutists like control on speed and sense of shruti.

Raman has composed music for many light and devotional songs for audio cassettes and is popular as a performer in many parts of the country. He has toured Japan and Switzerland as a member of cultural troupes.

V.K.Raman
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Malleswaram, Bangalore 560003
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By A.P.Rao